



Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fall Forest Fire Season Begins Oct. 1

Citizens reminded to take precaution, adhere to outdoor burning laws

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Oct. 1, 2012) – The Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF) is once again preparing for an active wildfire season as lack of rain this summer and increased fuel loads from spring storms could pose problems for fighting fires.

“Despite recent rainfalls, most of Kentucky is still very dry, especially the western part of the state,” said Leah MacSwords, director of KDF. “In addition to the drought, the spring tornadoes have left many of our woodlands damaged. The accumulation of storm-damaged trees and limbs not only create additional ‘fuel’ for wildland fire, it increases the danger to our firefighters.”

Forestry officials say that taking extra precautions with fires around homes and camp fires as well as being alert to forest arson can eliminate the majority of wildfires that occur in Kentucky. Other recommendations include the following:

- Be aware of all outdoor burning restrictions, including forest fire hazard seasons, air quality and waste management regulations, restrictions imposed by local ordinances and county burn bans.
- Avoid burning anything during fire hazard seasons and during times of dry, windy conditions. Outdoor burning is illegal between the hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. within 150 feet of any woodland or brushland during forest fire seasons.
- Extinguish all fires completely. Never leave a fire unattended and always extinguish fires if conditions become too windy.

- Allow hot ashes from woodstoves and fireplaces to cool before disposing outdoors.
- Extinguish smoking materials properly. Put out cigarettes, cigars, or pipes only in cleared areas free of vegetation or flammable material.
- Avoid parking cars, trucks, or recreational vehicles on dry vegetation. The exhaust system on a vehicle can reach a temperature of more than 1,000 degrees, which is hot enough to start a wildfire.
- Incorporate “Firewise” practices around homes and communities in forested areas. Firewise practices range from creating defensible space by removing leaves, vegetation and firewood to ensuring access for safety personnel and equipment in rural or isolated areas.
- And as always - Report suspicious acts of arson to the nearest Kentucky State Police post or call the Target Arson Hotline at 1-800-27-ARSON.

Fall fire season officially begins Oct. 1 and runs through Dec. 15. During this time, it is illegal to burn anything within 150 feet of any woodland or brushland between the hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. For more information about forest fire seasons, outdoor burning restrictions or fire prevention tips, contact the Kentucky Division of Forestry at 1-800-866-0555 or visit the division’s website at <http://forestry.ky.gov/Pages/default.aspx>.

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Editor’s note: *The mission of the Kentucky Division of Forestry is to protect and enhance the forest resources of the Commonwealth. The agency is responsible for preventing and suppressing wildfires on state and private lands as well as providing assistance to landowners and communities for the purpose of sustaining the health, diversity and productivity of our forests and to meet the needs of present and future generations.*